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ABSTRACT

Administrators are forced to deal simultaneously with a problem and its solution, creating a situation that prevents logical efforts toward analyzing problems and investigating alternative solutions. School districts often have difficulty in mobilizing appropriate resources to solve a problem. Administrative staff members must assume responsibilities that require planning and management skills for which they have not been trained by either academic courses or job experience. The Pennsylvania Executive Academy was established to help school districts resolve pressing local educational problems. The academy provides school district administrative teams an opportunity to acquire planning, management, and problem-solving skills and to use these skills in designing action plans to solve problems. This operational handbook contains an organizational chart, job descriptions, program descriptions, and outlines the academy's role and the procedures necessary to obtain its services. (Author/MLF)

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OPERATIONAL HANDBOOK

PENNSYLVANIA EXECUTIVE ACADEMY

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THE PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF IN-SERVICE

EA 010 547

Pennsylvania Department of Education 1977

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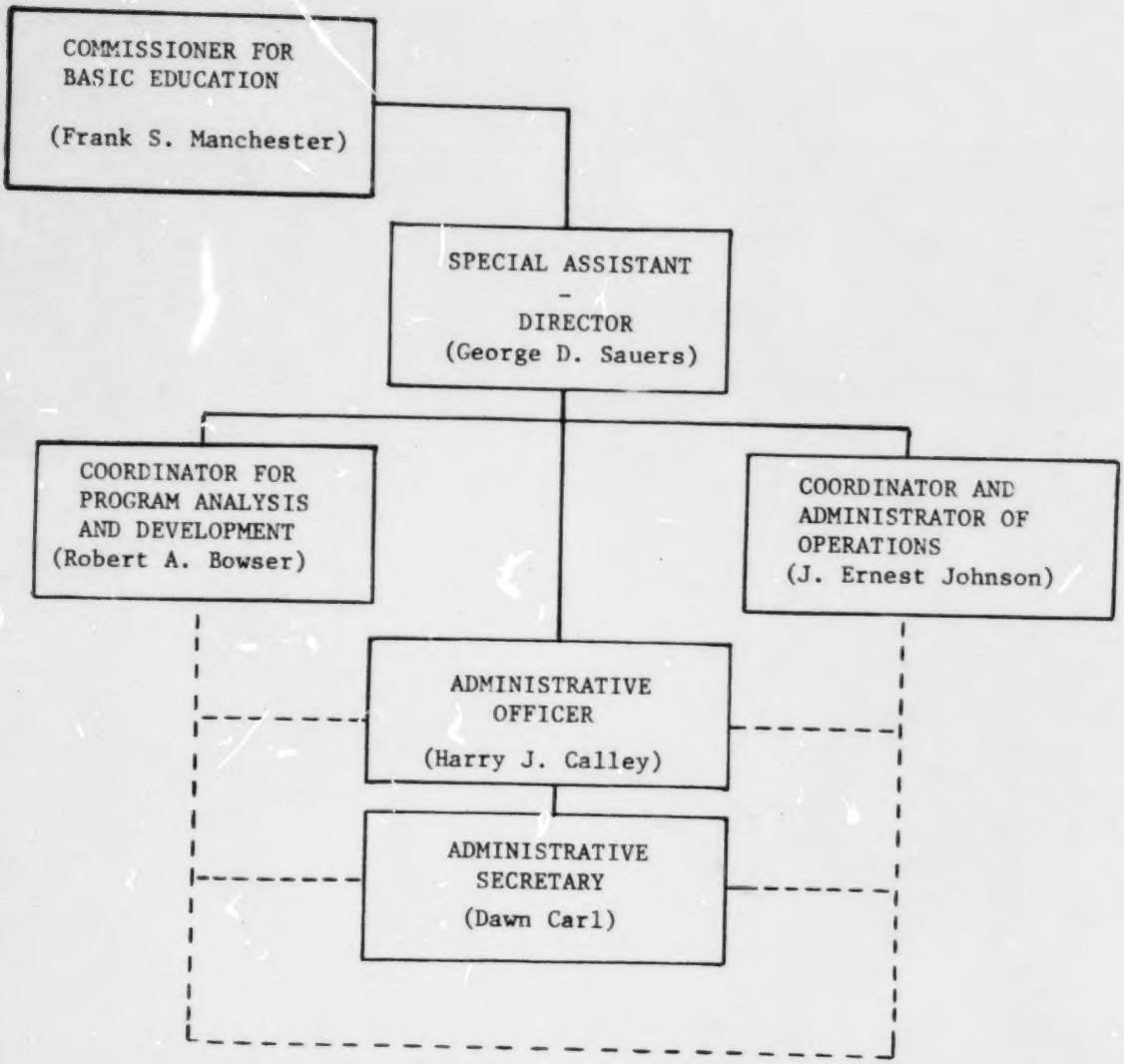
INTRODUCTION

In light of today's educational pace, administrators are forced to deal simultaneously with a problem and its solution, creating a situation that prevents logical efforts toward analyzing problems and investigating alternative solutions. School districts, intermediate units and area vocational-technical schools (hereinafter referred to as school districts) often have difficulty in mobilizing appropriate resources to solve a problem. Administrative staff members must assume responsibilities that require planning and management skills for which they have not been trained by either academic courses or job experience.

The Pennsylvania Executive Academy, as one of the top priorities of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, was established to help school districts resolve pressing local educational problems. The academy provides school district executive (administrative) teams an opportunity to acquire planning, management and problem-solving skills and to use these skills in designing action plans to solve problems.

In order that school districts and Department of Education staff members become familiar with the Executive Academy, this operational handbook has been codified and offered for clarification.

ORGANIZATION CHART



10.0 ACADEMY ROLE AND PURPOSE

The ability of an organization to grow and change depends on its constant reflection on past and present decisions and the use of this data in future decision-making with respect to organizational expansion, improvement and relationships. Improvement in quality and quantity is a stated and operational principle to be optimized.

The content of the academy's professional development programs shall be in line with current administrative needs and interests. The audience shall be selected on the basis of perceived and documented needs as identified from needs assessment data obtained from the school districts.

20.0 ACADEMY RELATIONS

The strength of a service unit is directly related to how well the unit performs and to the communication system it has established between its major client and itself. The Pennsylvainia Executive Academy is interested in quality service and shall continue to improve its relationship with school districts and other organizations such as: colleges/ universities, businesses, industries and consulting firms who can enhance these strengths.

The following policies and practices are specifically cited to facilitate this intent:

- Academy staff (both permanent and temporarily assigned staff) shall recognize the integrity of the above-mentioned groups and shall seek to enhance the relationship with them. Disagreements or philosophical differences shall be discussed. However, Department of Education positions and relationships are the prerogative of the Commissioner of Basic Education and the Secretary of Education.
- Focus groups may be established to help the academy staff identify needs, establish goals and objectives, explore appropriate delivery systems and select procedures for appropriate staff. Since such focus groups have no official standing as a board or advisory committee, only expenses incurred in travel or meetings shall be reimbursable by the department.
- Requests for assistance from organizations such as intermediate units, Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, Pennsylvania School Board's Association, Pennsylvania State Education Association, etc. shall be first cleared through the

Office of Communications in the Commissioner's Office or other Commissioner-designated persons.

- None of these policy postions may be at variance with current or future department/agency positions.

30.0 ACADEMY STAFF

The staff of the academy consists of five permanent members and varying numbers of temporary members as situations warrant. The permanent staff members are as follows:

George D. Sauers - Director

Robert A. Bowser - Coordinator, Program Analysis and Development

J. Ernest Johnson - Coordinator and Administrator of Operations

Harry J. Calley - Administrative Officer

Dawn Carl - Administrative Secretary

The staff members organize, develop and operate the four types of Executive Academy program presented each year. In addition, they oversee the allocation of funds for small grants to school districts and provide research and papers on important topics in education.

The temporary staff members usually needed to help at an academy seminar are acquired primarily from the various bureaus and offices of the Department of Education. They give freely and generously of their time, efforts and expertise in order to make each academy a success.

31.0 ADJUNCT STAFF

Staff members for the problem solving and special interest seminars are chosen from the Department of Education and school districts.

As a result of identifying the yearly program topics at the Commissioner's cabinet meeting in June each bureau and office director volunteers his or her services to the academy and assigns staff members for specific academies. These assignments are made in July and August for the coming school year and are forwarded to the Executive Academy.

An orientation session is held for the prospective facilitators (adjunct staff) to alert them to the needs and expectations of the academy director and the school districts attending the academies.

Further orientation meetings are held with individual groups of facilitators assigned to academies as the individual academy date approaches.

Occasionally, adjunct staff members are recruited from school districts or other agencies. They are paid for their services on a consultant basis at the rate specified in Section 80.0 of this handbook.

40.0 JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The academy functions under the direction of the Commissioner for Basic Education and the director of the academy. There are five permanent staff members whose roles and job descriptions are described in the following subsections.

40.1 SPECIAL ASSISTANT/DIRECTOR

The director reports directly to the Office of the Commissioner and serves as the continuing education advisor and representative to the department's Professional Growth Committee. This person's responsibility is to establish special relationships with the various educational professional organizations via the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Communications. The director also shares with the Assistant Commissioner for Communications and the Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Evaluation the responsibility of being aware of mutually desirable information, operating policies, program priorities and new or continuing projects. The director has the responsibility and authority to negotiate with office/bureau directors for adjunct staff as needed to carry out approved program schedules and/or approved special projects. The special assistant/director has advisory responsibilities to Higher Education in the area of administrative certification requirements and/or practices. The special assistant/director meets regularly with the Commissioner's "cabinet."

40.2 COORDINATOR FOR PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT

The coordinator reports directly to the special assistant/director of the Executive Academy. This person not only establishes and maintains effective relationships with academy personnel and temporarily assigned task force members, but identifies and arranges all staff needs and resource allocations.

The coordinator for program analysis and development also:

- Establishes liaison with all special assistants to the Commissioner and with staff members under the assistant commissioners.
- Is responsible for advising the special assistant/director on new skills, techniques, models, etc., which, if properly adapted to public administration needs, would enhance and improve the performance of district management personnel.
- Is responsible for preparing feasibility and acceptability files on projected program topics and establishing resource files on program topics. The files are to include, but not be limited to, rationale, objectives, activities, evaluation.
- Has the responsibility for conducting or operating the following projects: the annual needs survey, analysis of topic areas, literature searches on selected topics, preparation of position rationales, video program development.

40.3 COORDINATOR AND ADMINISTRATOR OF OPERATIONS

The coordinator reports directly to the special assistant/director of the Executive Academy. This person also:

- Establishes and maintains effective relationships with academy personnel and temporarily assigned staff.
- Establishes liaison with all special assistants to the Commissioner and with staff members under the assistant commissioners.
- Is responsible for advising the special assistant/director on matters related to district administrator needs and program needs and for planning the annual schedule.
- Shall provide consultative services to temporarily assigned staff, provide access to resource materials and provide for and conduct necessary in-service activities that help temporary staff develop planning and interaction skills.

40.4 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The administrative officer reports directly to the Director of the Executive Academy and provides such assistance to the coordinators as required. This person has the responsibility for financial planning, contracts, processing duplication, printing, bookkeeping and auditing. Maintenance of such records as: participants and schools, certificates, visitations - pre and post visitations, special grants, internal resource filing and others as required also constitute duties to be performed. The academy programs pose additional duties and responsibilities, which include facility planning; equipment and supply requisitions; special arrangements for participants; coordination of billing and invoices to facilitate payments, establish and coordinate transportation needs of staff and/or consultants.

40.5 ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

The administrative secretary has the responsibility for performing a variety of administrative and secretarial tasks in support of academy programs. This person must be familiar with the functions of the department and the functions of the statewide program of the Executive Academy. Tasks assigned to this individual are: (1) preparation of correspondence with participants, (2) monitoring of contracts and preparation of invoices to order payment, (3) maintenance of such records as required for auditing, evaluation and filing system, (4) assisting in the coordination of staff follow-up activities, (5) establishment and maintenance of cooperative working relationships with other governmental agencies, (6) preparation of such required materials as certificates, supplies, etc. in operation of the academy and other related work as required.

50.0 TYPES OF ACADEMY PROGRAMS

Essentially, the Executive Academy sponsors four types of executive or management seminars: (1) problem-solving, (2) management skill development, (3) special interest and (4) developmental. Each type is designed to serve a different need and caters to the executive team in a vastly different manner, as defined below:

- Problem-Solving. This academy program enables a district team, headed by the superintendent or designated team leader, to work through a sequence of planning activities. The activities help the team assess a specific problem, determine goals and objectives, decide on solution alternatives, study costs and arrive at an acceptable strategy for final solution of the school district's problem. The academy provides information, materials and human resources that help a team reach this end.
- Management Skill Development. This type of academy is relatively new, instituted in the 1975-1976 school year. It is a way for district executives to acquire and practice new management skills useful in the overall improvement of the educational system. Examples of these skills would be (1) improved communication skills, (2) crisis management skills and (3) more efficient use of time.
- Special Interest Seminars. The special interest academies are developed and sponsored as a result of special requests from groups of school district persons with like interests and problems. Primarily, these seminars deal with specific job-related problems and concepts that need clarification or solving so that a school district person can function more efficiently.

- Developmental. This academy approach, also introduced in the 1976-1977 school year, basically deals with new and emerging educational problems, innovations or ideas. Rather than providing the materials and expertise, this type of Executive Academy enlists executive teams or individuals to help study a concern and contribute to the establishment of new policies, regulations or guidelines.

60.0 ACADEMY LOCATIONS

The site of the academy is important in several respects. One of the prime requisites is a location as near as possible to the Department of Education itself, where resource people are available as needed from time to time, even on short notice.

Also, the academy has a unique need for special types of meeting rooms; the number of these rooms vary at times. One such need is for enough space that groups are visible to each another without interfering with another's discussions.

70.0 BID PROCEDURES FOR FACILITIES

The procedure for seeking bids to select the site of the academy is as follows:

Invitations to bid are sent to at least three area hotels/motels, along with tentative dates of planned use by the academy in the coming year. Included are dates that allow for some flexibility and some dates that have to remain fixed as stated. A sample menu is also sent out to give the prospective hotels and motels an idea of the type of food that the academy expects.

The bid specifications, in addition to dates and suggested meals, explain meeting room requirements, small-group breakouts, amplification needs, special support needs and refreshment needs.

Bidders are notified of a closing date for bids, which are opened in the presence of academy staff and other department personnel, such as those from the Comptroller's Office. Bids and work sheets are turned over to the Comptroller's Office for verification.

All unsuccessful bidders are properly notified of bid selection by mail not later than seven working days after bids are opened.

80.0 CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

Generally, contracts for speakers and/or consultants include a modest honorarium as well as traveling expenses and costs of room and meals.

It is an academy policy to pay $20 per hour, excluding preparation time, or $75 per day, whichever is less. Exceptions may be made by the director to encourage people with unique experiences to lend their services to the academy.

90.0 ACADEMY FEES

The Executive Academy does not charge a registration fee for participants and academy faculty (facilitators, consultants or speakers) and materials are provided free of charge for each session. The cost to a team attending an Executive Academy covers travel, rooms and meals. For planning purposes, a school district, intermediate unit or vocational school may want to use the figures below to estimate total costs. The figures may vary because of menus selected and bids submitted by hotels or motels.

- Room Costs:
  - Double occupancy - $ 14.31 per day (tax included)
  - Single occupancy - $ 19.08 per day (tax included)
- Meal Costs:
  - Breakfast - $ 3.00 (gratuity included)
  - Lunch - $ 4.25 (gratuity included)
  - Dinner - $ 8.00 (gratuity included)
- Travel costs depend on distance and mode of travel.

The costs shown above may be extended for each day that the academy is in session.

100.0 YEARLY ACADEMY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The development of a yearly academy program schedule begins in February for the school year beginning the following September. The steps undertaken by the academy staff to establish the yearly program schedule are as follows:

- Initial contact with department staff, (bureau and office directors and perhaps additional staff) including the Division of Research staff, to discuss what should be included in the needs assessment instrument (February 1).
- Specific items are selected for inclusion in the assessment instrument (February 15).
- Develop editorial specifications with the Division of Research and the academy staff -- topics, length, format and complexity (February 15).
- Circulate tentative instrument to the Executive Academy staff for a final critique (March 6).
- Needs assessment instrument typed (March 10).
- Needs assessment instrument printed (March 20).
- Tabulation sheets developed (March 15).
- Tabulation sheets typed (March 15).
- Tabulation sheets printed (March 15).
- Arrangements completed for mailing needs assessment instrument (April 5).
- Procedure established for receiving and tabulating information (April 1).

- Needs assessment instrument received from the field (April 15).
- Tabulation of data completed and resources identified (April 20).
- Results of tabulation put into a form to be analyzed and interpreted (May 15).
- Interpretation of all tabulation results completed (May 15).
- Concept papers on priority topics developed from the results of the needs assessment (May 22).
- Concept papers typed and prepared for the Commissioner's cabinet meeting. Papers circulated to bureau and office directors for comment. Appropriate bureau and office staff should be involved (May 22).
- The Commissioner and "cabinet" make final decisions on topics, dates, staff availability and commitment, and QPG use (June 20).
- Final schedule prepared for distribution to the field (June 21).
- Yearly program announcement mailed to the field (August 1). Topics may be added to the yearly program schedule or agenda later in the year if a need is demonstrated or if a request is submitted by bureau directors, the commissioners, the Deputy Secretary or the Secretary. Additional topics may be added to the schedule as a result of special requests from the local districts.

110.0 ANNOUNCING ACADEMY PROGRAMS

The department uses a variety of channels to inform school districts about academy programs: (1) Basic Education Circulars (a LEC is a communication from the department's Commissioner for Basic Education to chief school administrators), (2) a descriptive brochure sent to all school administrators in the state, (3) periodicals of state educational organizations and (4) educational radio and TV stations. Since these sources provide complete information about registration procedures, school districts have ample time to prepare to send teams to academies of their choice.

120.0 REGISTRATION FOR THE ACADEMY

Each school district, intermediate unit and vocational-technical school receives an announcement of scheduled academy seminars for the year. A subsequent flyer is sent out as each academy comes up on the schedule. Usually, the individual announcement is received in the field eight to 10 weeks prior to the seminar.

Registration requests should be submitted as soon as possible. Each announcement usually states a cut-off date for registration and supplies information on costs to the school district.

To register, one must submit a letter that contains the following information:

- The academy in which an individual or team wishes to participate.
- The number and names of team members who plan to attend.
- A short statement describing the tentative problem to be analyzed and solved.
- Any special materials or consultant assistance needed.

Letter of registration should be sent to:

George D. Sauers, Director
Executive Academy
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126.

130.0 PLANNING AN ACADEMY PROGRAM

The academy is carefully planned to produce programs that serve the needs of participating school district teams. The following sequence prior to each academy helps insure the quality of each program:

- An interested school district identifies a problem to be resolved, selects team members and registers for an academy program.
- An academy facilitator visits the team in the school district to help each member clarify the problem and to provide additional academy information.
- The academy staff plans sessions on the basis of a review of the consultant/facilitator visit to the district and information submitted by the participating school district team.
- The academy staff collects resource materials needed by district teams during the academy.
- The academy staff identifies resource people who can provide special expertise in particular problem areas and arranges for them to serve as presenters in general sessions during the academy program.
- The academy staff prepares and forwards a notebook to participating district teams.
- The academy staff participates in training sessions to strengthen its training skills and to review the plans and materials for the programs.
- The academy staff reviews the tentative program with department resource people and outside experts/presenters.
- The academy staff keeps in touch with each district team throughout the pre-academy phase.

140.0 CONDUCTING AN ACADEMY PROGRAM

The sessions of each academy, aimed at the needs of each district team, are held in various settings throughout the week. Approximately 80 per cent of the time is spent in small groups and in team planning sessions. Under the guidance of an academy staff member, a team uses the PEAPP (Pennsylvania Executive Academy Planning Procedure) to design an action plan to resolve its specific problem. Numerous resource people from the department work during the first two days to help the team analyze the problem and explore alternative solution strategies with help from information resources available at the academy site. During the last two days, the team spends a major portion of its time developing and refining a plan that it will take home to implement in the school district.

Large-group focus sessions are used occasionally to present ideas and strategies that are relevant to the program theme and to allow a number of invited presenters to share their expertise with all participants. Where appropriate, presenters also serve as resource persons to individual teams. Panels, seminars and informal question-and-answer periods add variety to general sessions and allow participating teams to exchange ideas and opinions with these experts and with each other.

An academy staff member works closely with each team. Serving the dual role of skilled trainer-group facilitator, the staff member helps teams use generic planning processes and shares knowledge about current school improvement strategies.

The activities at each academy are designed with three major objectives in mind:

- To enable the district team to acquire (or strengthen) planning skills: The team gains an understanding of the steps in the PEAPP model by applying the series to an actual problem or challenge it brings to the academy. By participating in numerous task analysis sessions and by completing written learning sequences, team members gain skill in needs assessment, policy analysis, funding alternative solutions, implementation design and evaluation.
- To enable the district team to function as an effective problem-solving unit: Participants spend most of their academy time with their own district team in a variety of sessions that are designed to allow individuals to develop their own proficiencies as well as to provide experience in working as a unit. As the team works on tasks that require group effort, it learns process skills that enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
- To enable the district team to develop an action plan that resolves a pressing local district problem: The skills the team acquires during the academy are applied to the district's own problem. Using the PEAPP model as a framework, the team forms an action plan for implementation back home. Progress reports are scheduled at various times during the academy week, and a completed plan is expected before the academy program concludes.

140.1 CERTIFICATES

Two types of certificates are issued to academy participants: the "gold" to those who attend a problem-solving seminar and the "black" for attendance at all other academies, such as special interest, management skill development and developmental seminars. Each certificate signifies a participant's satisfactory completion of an academy program and recognizes an individual who attempts to improve on a management skill or solve a perplexing school district problem.

The certificates, issued at the end of an academy seminar, contain names of participants embossed in gold or black. The certificates are suitable for framing and display in the school district.

140.2 FOLLOW-UP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Besides making many resources (materials, resource persons, research data, visuals, etc.) available during the sessions, the Executive Academy strives to support participating districts and intermediate units after the specific academy ends. This support may be in the form of new and innovative materials that help the district solve a problem. Additionally, support may be in the form of on-site consultation requested by the district. The consultant may be an academy staff member, another department staff member or a person who served as a facilitator to the team at the academy. In any case, staff, resources and financial assistance (Section 140.3) will be available for one year following any given academy session.

140.3 GRANTS OF ASSISTANCE

Sometimes after a district executive team completes an Executive Academy, it identifies a critical problem, analyzes various alternatives and chooses a workable strategy to solve the problem. Modest financial assistance may be obtained through a federal Title IV Part C grant.

The team must submit a completed application (Activity 2 or Activity 3) to the Executive Academy, along with an anticipated budget. The normal processing procedures are (1) meeting selective criteria, (2) reviewer approval and (3) cost analysis.

Necessarily, these grants will be modest in order to allow a number of districts to attempt to solve identified problems. The grants may rang- from $800 to $3,000, depending on the problem, the size of the district, the amount of time and complexity of the solution.

Applications for grant assistance must be submitted to the Executive Academy, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Box 911, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126, within five weeks following the attendance at an academy.

150.0 EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP

The PDE continually tries to improve the academy and conducts the following activities to learn how effective academy programs and sessions really are:

- Extensive interviews are conducted with all participants during an academy to determine if sessions are meeting individual needs.
- Asks all participants before they leave the academy, to fill out a written questionnaire to help academy staff determine how well objectives are being met.
- Interviews selected participants for suggestions to improve academy programs.
- Reviews the action plan submitted by each district team to determine its quality and feasibility.
- Critiques each program to suggest improvements that are needed.

Academy staff uses all of the above information to redesign total programs, individual sessions and program materials.

In addition to evaluating each academy, the department's Division of Research does a broader, more in-depth evaluation of the total academy (programs, procedures, facilities and topics) quarterly to determine if changes and improvements can be made. Any changes and improvements can then be instituted continuously throughout the school year.

160.0 DISSEMINATION OF MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING SKILLS

· Newsletter:

The academy staff has begun to publish a newsletter to keep in touch with those district management (executive) teams who have already attended the academy. The newsletter, containing articles that are of general and specific interest, offers information about new and innovative ideas from business, industry and education and information on management processes and planning. Another feature will be the anticipated schedule of academies.

Material for the newsletter is solicited from Executive Academy staff and school district personnel. Another source of material is persons who have served as facilitators or consultants and who can provide information in a specific area or field of study.

The newsletter is published four times per year: August, November, February and May. Additional special interest editions will be published as needed.

· Video Tapes:

Besides publishing the newsletter, the academy provides school district executives with video tapes of management and planning concepts and skills. The tapes will be distributed to districts on request.

· Monograph:

Another method of disseminating information to districts will be a monograph series which will treat one concept at a time in depth.

· Articles:

Reprints of published articles dealing with management skills will be distributed to school district executive teams upon request.

· RISE:

A wealth of information on management and planning skills is available to the academy and to districts through Research Information Services for Education.

170.0 OUTSIDE FOCUS GROUP

No one person or group can know everything about areas of concern to educators today. As a result, the Executive Academy uses an outside focus group (an ad hoc committee) as a sounding board for new ideas, as a suggestion group to improve the academy procedure and as a group to spread the word about the Executive Academy.

The use of an outside focus group is a departure from the traditional "educational advisory group" because it consists of representatives from business and industry as well as education. Members of this group are recruited from the following sources:

- School districts
- Intermediate units
- State colleges
- Universities
- Business
- Industry
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Professional organizations

180.0 CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR STAFF

An important facet of the academy is the information passed on to participants by academy staff, facilitators and consultants. First, to become continually aware of innovations and educational trends, staff members attend meetings, seminars and conferences. Second, for the academy staff to be able to choose appropriate persons to assist in the academy, it must meet and listen to educators, planners, businessmen and industrialists who have insight into planning, decision-making and other aspects of management.

The academy sets aside money in its budget for each staff member to attend two or three professional conferences, seminars or meetings designed to upgrade professional competencies. Staff members may attend continuing education sessions sponsored by the department or outside conferences sponsored by educational organizations, such as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the American Association of School Administrators or the American Educational Research Association. Conferences sponsored by noneducational institutions include those offered by such corporations as Xerox, American Telephone and Telegraph and Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania. A third general source of continuing education training is the National Academy for School Executives, similar to the Pennsylvania Executive Academy but on a national level.

Additional money is available for training academy staff members through the Training Division, Bureau of Personnel. The continuing education opportunity provided under this arrangement is normally in the form of seminars and workshops arranged within the department.